

Enlogies on Washington 13

ORATION

ON THE DEATH OF

General **GEORGE WASHINGTON,**

DELIVERED AT THE REQUEST OF THE CITIZENS OF

CASTINE,

ON THE

22d February, A. D. 1800.

CONGRESS, AND THE GENERAL COURT OF

MASSACHUSETTS.

By **WILLIAM WETMORE,**

Barriſter at Law.

Semper bonos, nomenque tuum, laudesque manebunt.

CASTINE:

PUBLISHED BY DAVID J. WATERS,



TO WM. WETMORE, Esq.

CASTINE, FEB. 22, 1808.

SIR,

THE town of Castine have appointed us a Committee, to wait on you, with the thanks of said town, for the excellent Oration delivered by you this day; and to request a copy for the Press.

JOSEPH PERKINS.

PHILIP JARVIS.

MARK HATCH.

DAVID HOWE.

JOB NELSON.

To Messrs. JOSEPH PERKINS, PHILIP JARVIS,
MARK HATCH, DAVID HOWE, & JOB NEL-
SON; a Committee from the town of Castine.

GENTLEMEN,

THE request of my fellow citizens does me unexpected honor, as the hasty composition they so partially commend was not intended for the public eye;—if it has given them any satisfaction—if in its tendency, it be calculated to make us better citizens, and to applaud and imitate transcendent merit, I very readily give it to the world, “with all its imperfections on its head.”

And am, Gentlemen,

Your Most Obedient Servant,

WILLIAM WETMORE.

Castine, Feb. 22, 1808.

AN ORATION

ON THE DEATH OF

General George Washington.

Respected fellow Citizens, Friends, Countrymen & Strangers!

THE American people, in their numerous towns and villages, as well as in their crowded cities, throughout this wide extended continent, have agreed, with a unanimity honorable to their character, and unexampled in history, to assemble on this memorable day, to deplore the loss of one of their most faithful friends, and constant benefactors. While they submit, with humble reverence, to the afflicting dispensations of the Greatest and the Best of Beings, & ponder upon the extent and magnitude of their misfortune it is a grateful employment, and at the same time, we trust, a public advantage, to expatiate on his virtues, and hold them up to view, for an example to the age in which we live, and for the imitation of our children in all future times of the Republic.

This was the laudable practice of antiquity, which modern manners have not altogether refused to adopt: The heroes and benefactors of mankind have been universally, in some period of history, the subjects of gratitude and applause; the celebration of exalted merit has animated men of noble spirits, in all ages of the world, and especially the citizens of free Republics, to accomplish their minds, to exert their talents, and to practice all the moral and social virtues; to def

pise cold and heat, to bear hunger and thirst, and to lead lives of hardyhood, that they might extend the dominion and fame of their country, by which their own reputation might be equally extolled, and their names handed down to posterity, as the protectors and delight of their species: No measure could be more wisely calculated to promote the emulation of the virtuous and to restrain the aspiring ambition of the abandoned; for though power and wealth, always have been, and will continue to be, the great objects of private pursuit even power and wealth, without the love and esteem of mankind, are of little value to great and generous minds.

I could have wished, fellow citizens, that the discharge of this important part of the public duty, had fallen to abler hands; but as your partiality has selected me to this employment, my best intentions will, I hope, be accepted, for the deficiency of my abilities.

A simple, and altogether unadorned narration, of the public services performed by this great man, from his first heroic conduct at the age of little more than twenty-one, to the early day of his ever to be lamented departure, would form the best, the noblest panegyric, upon his public conduct; but to delineate them correctly, would require a volume. Some future PLUTARCH shall do his memory ample justice: were we to dilate upon his private excellencies, it would be only to repeat what the world is full of, and his countrymen intimately know and applaud. Mine: the humbler task to sketch a general outline, rather than to paint, were I able, the finished piece, to point out some of the more distinguished acts of

his public life, and to enumerate a few of his many private virtues.

—When France, an ever intriguing foe, was in possession of the immense territory of Canada, and claimed the rich country on both sides the great river *Mississippi* from the *Illinois* to the Ocean, we all know, from our fathers, that she obstinately persevered in her designs of planting a chain of forts and settlements, in the rear of the then British Colonies, from the lakes of the North, thro' the fertile regions watered by the Ohio, to her great western boundary; from whence she might safely annoy & at some future period, perhaps reduce to Gallio power, this dearly purchased land of our Ancestors. It is a remarkable fact in our history, that WASHINGTON, made his first entry on the stage of public life, at this important era. Just arrived to manhood, he boldly offered his services to cross the pathless wilderness, a distance of more than four hundred miles, at a most inclement season of the year, with a single companion, and bear a daring remonstrance, to the French Commander, against the incroachments of his nation; a trust which he discharged with firmness, with dispatch and prudence. Afterwards commanding the militia, and accompanying the obstinate & haughty Braddock to repel the invaders by arms, while his young advice is proudly disdained, the army is defeated, the General slain, and the broken remains of a gallant band, covered in their retreat and saved from total destruction, by HIM who became the deliverer of his country. — Thus the first public act of his life, was to preserve entire, that extensive territory, which under his

auspices, in future times, was to become an independent empire; the asylum of liberty; the peaceful seat of commerce, of learning and the arts—the protectress of the rights of human nature:—& thus early the great disposer of human events, was pleased to indicate the establishment of our state and nation, and to point out our leader in the dangerous road.

Tho' from this period, we hear little of him till the great contest between Britain and her Colonies, his active mind was employed, in laying deep the solid basis of that fame which the universe, with one consenting voice bestows on his character. True glory, like his, can be acquired only by a life of unwearied attentions, of toil and unceasing vigilance: a great commander must unite in himself all civil and political, as well as military excellence; without the former, he will be deficient in the latter. Diligence is of itself sufficient to acquire the knowledge of all other sciences, but in the art of war, where there are so many seemingly independent parts, yet so connected, so many reflections necessary, & so many cases & circumstances to be viewed collectively, & distinguished at a single glance, a life of application has been deemed indispensable to perfect the brightest talents of nature: but what shall we say of the American Chief? without the advantages, without the opportunities enjoyed by CÆSAR OF TURENNE, by HANNIBAL or MARLBOROUGH he arrived, by the force of his genius and industry alone, to the highest achievements of a soldier. In rural retreats, in cultivating the earth, his delightful employment, in traversing the wilds of *Virginia*, in exploring

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• & defending her extensive territories at that season
of life which others devote to pleasure; he fortified
his frame, to bear all the rigours & the extremes of
our ever varying seasons; to endure fatigue with-
out complaint, and the privations of life with con-
stancy & fortitude: afterwards, in the faithful and
punctual discharge of the more confined colonial
duties of a military officer, a magistrate and servant
of the people, in habits of industry and practicing
all the virtues, he formed his vast & capacious mind
to the highest duties of a general and a statesman.

When therefore, that illustrious band of patriots,
who laid the solid foundations of our Republic, in
1774, at the memorable Congress of *Philadelphia*,
found it necessary to single out the man from the
thousands of *America*, to command her future ar-
mies, every eye was turned to the hero of *Virginia*;
so known to fame as a patriot, a statesman, & a com-
mander, and so conspicuously pre-eminent was he,
among men, selected by their country to defend
her rights, whom the world thought equally emi-
nent.

Need I remind you of his disinterestedness; (1) so un-
exampled in modern times; or of that innate mod-
esty and self diffidence, the certain proof of supe-
rior merit, which so eminently distinguished him
when we put our all into his hands? when he dis-
claimed all proffers of reward? when the satisfac-
tion arising from the discharge of duty; from a
defence of the injured rights of *America*, which was
to cost him so much fatigue and anxiety, so many
sleepless nights & weary days, expose his fortunes (2)
to ruin, and his life to the villain's dagger, the sword

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of the enemy, or an ignominious death, when his May,
was all the reward he would accept for such imminent
hazards? Let it not be said that others were equally
exposed; nor that the honor of the station, dangerous
pre-eminence! was the object of desire: No, in the
language of our enemies, he was the head and sup-
port of a daring rebellion; as a Royal governor,
had proclaimed two eminent patriots before him to
strike at the head therefore, was to crush the rebel-
lion, as they vainly argued, and an act of oblivion
had graciously pardoned the most of his adherents:
As bigotry, exposed the deliverer of the United
Provinces, to the knife of the assassin; so loyalty
would have justified the blackest crime, to take off
a WASHINGTON.

After the memorable battle of *Breed's-bill*, we all
remember with what celerity & zeal he assumed the
command & introduced order discipline & persever-
ance among troops, whose bosoms glow'd with cou-
rage & love to their country, but whose natural in-
dependence and unexpected sufferings, rendered in-
flexible to authority, and deaf even to their own
dangers. What talents, natural and acquired are ne-
cessary to maintain that just subordination in an ar-
my, composed of such discordant parts! if too much
severity disgusts, too much lenity produces negli-
gence & licentiousness:—but how suddenly did he
acquire the confidence & esteem of a high spirited
and independent body of undisciplined men! and,
without means of defence, how did he animate their
courage, at the very commencement of a doubt-
ful war, to imprison, within their strong in-
trenchments, a veteran army! proving himself at

once superior to the most experienced, the ablest & most successful Generals, of an antient and warlike nation ; and do we not all remember, that this confidence and esteem, so suddenly inspired, never for a moment, during a long and hazardous war, failed to animate the zeal of an enlightened yeomanry ? and that the sons of New England were relied on by their General, in every daring enterprize, as his firmest support ? had Jealousies prevailed, who can say, what fatal consequences had ensued ? O fortunate confidence ! the result of mutual esteem ! a monument more durable than marble to perpetuate the love of the troops, and the talents, as well as the affection of their General ! Confidence is never bestowed, but where we observe great coolness as well as knowledge ; since the days of HANNIBAL, no Commander of an army has discovered greater serenity, in the most adverse as well as prosperous scenes, more profound secrecy, or higher abilities for governing & attaching to his person, men so various in their habits, manners and even language, as those who, at different periods of the war, composed the American armies.

When the moment arrived for repelling the formidable foe from our capital, what citizen of America is ignorant of the vastness of the preparations, or of the wisdom and foresight, with which all the measures of the General, were planned and executed, to possess the commanding heights of *Dorchester*, from whence to pour the thunders of America, and to compel him to hazard a tempestuous sea ? The eventful morning discovered to the watchful enemy the sudden labours of the night ;

as a last effort, their veteran bands are drawn out to make the perilous assault, and force the encroaching enemy to abandon their designs; but the guardian genius of our Country is not to be surprized; in momentous affairs he trusts to no intermediate intelligence; but rightly divining the intentions of the enemy from their duty, he calmly explores the distant town to descry their march; no sooner do the selected troops appear than all the ardour of the hero fire's the American Chief; he beholds the important day when the destinies of his Country are perhaps to be decided; his horse bears him from the hill with eagle speed; he visits all points of his army, cheers them by his presence & issues the orders which are to ensure success: but so judiciously were his plans conceived and so faithfully executed, that troops, who were strangers to fear, deemed it imprudent to make the attack, and the Ocean bore them, discomfited, from our shores. It was a bloodless victory; but victory thus cheaply obtained is more welcome to the feelings of our nature, as the General who is the instrument of it, merits more lasting applause: Had rashness prevailed, our Capital had been laid in ashes, to favour the retreat of an enemy, used to conflagration; but prudence in the garb of WASHINGTON, conducted the triumphal entry.

What place is there in America, where WASHINGTON commanded, that has not been immortalized, by some instance of his military skill? The unsuccessful battle of *Long Island*, was not hazarded by him with an undisciplined army from choice or a well founded prospect of victory, but in compli-

ence with the high and irresistible expectations of his country ; after all, perhaps we are indebted for the great misfortunes of that day, to the neglect of a subordinate General, an intrepid officer, in securing an important pass. Unhappy *Maryland* ! who for this neglect still mourns her youthful band, here cut off in the spring of life ! But who has not heard of the masterly retreat from that disastrous field ? under the eye of a disciplined and victorious army, commanded by the ablest Generals ? a retreat which had been so easily prevented, by reason of their vast superiority, and his insular situation, had the important moment of decision been neglected, amid the confusions and calamities of the day ?—a retreat conducted with such address, secrecy and dispatch, & under such a weight of disadvantages, as astonished and confounded the enemy, waiting only for the morning to storm a camp prepared to all appearance for a vigorous defence, but actually deserted.

Learning, like the great founder of the Russian Empire, to acquire victory from defeat ; he henceforth changes the warfare, & becomes the *FABIUS* of America : (3) with an army, reduced to a few brave adherents, he strives to restore the prostrate energies of his country, by art, by harassing the enemy, and by delay : but who can tell the distresses of his soul, when pursuing his hasty march through the *Jerseys*, over the rough and frost bound roads, the blood stained earth proclaimed the wants of his suffering companions ?—when all his pressing orders to a General, then high in the esteem of America, to advance to his relief, were obstinately

disobeyed, and treachery, at last its own righteous
 victim, aimed the deadly stroke at his liberty or
 life? but whatever were his distresses, they were
 not discoverable: his fortitude was invincible;
 patient, hardy, laborious and determined, he could
 bear cold, hunger and fatigue, better than any in-
 dividual of his army; no dejection appeared in his
 countenance; all his address was practised, & it
 was practised with success, to encourage at this im-
 portant crisis, his faithful officers; as the vigour of
 his mind was great, not bending to misfortune, but
 controlling it; so in adversity he discovered its
 extensive resources. It is the sure sign of greatness
 of soul to rise superior to the difficulties which op-
 press us: in a General who turns them to his ad-
 vantage, it not only indicates the native vigour
 & comprehension of his mind, but the extent of his
 reflections & industry. When the affairs of America
 were at the lowest ebb, and ruin stalked with
 gigantic strides, through our gloomy land, from
 the cold regions of the North, to the sultry climes
 of Georgia, and darkness lowered on the firmest
 countenance, WASHINGTON, ever watchful, cool
 and penetrating; undismayed by difficulties or
 dangers, from being pursued, dispersed, vanquish-
 ed, suddenly collecting a few recruits, by one dar-
 ing effort, at Trenton's stormy field, turns the tide of
 hostile success, and enters Philadelphia in triumph.
 This was the crisis of the war; but thinking nothing
 done, if more can be accomplished, he again crosses
 the Delaware, and strikes his decisive blow; in a
 dangerous situation, like the Carthaginian General
 he quits his camp by night, in the face of a fur-

rounding enemy, leaving the usual fires, and once more, as at *Long Island*, eludes his foe; by a forced circuitous march, at the dawn of day, he pours on valiant MAWHOOD at *Princeton*, and delivers a state from hostile ravages.

I will not follow him, through the five succeeding campaigns to the capture of a valiant army, led by a victorious chief from the conquered *Carolinas*:—Campaigns of cruel sufferings! in which he had to struggle with every distress and every perplexity, arising from armies raised only for sudden emergencies, daily melting away by sickness and disgust; paid by promises, never to be performed; destitute of supplies and naked to the rudest blasts of heaven: Campaigns in which sometimes, almost alone he had to oppose brave and well appointed troops, led on by veteran Generals, who each deserved the highest command; & yet Campaigns so well conducted, that, at the close of each, if America had not obtained splendid victories, she had maintained her cause, and proved to all the world, the madness of the attempt, to subjugate her well defended soil.

It is sufficient to remark that, from this auspicious period, despondency never once prevailed in the American breast; owing as much to a confidence in our Leader, as in the great resources of our Country: though unsuccessful in particular actions, as at *Brandywine*, & disappointed, as at *Germanstown* and *Monmouth*, his extensive mind, ever vigilant to guard against surprize and to counteract the regular armies of Britain;—ever looking forward, to seize some glorious opportunity of breaking down her power by some great enterprize, at length discover-

ed it, on the shores of the *Chesapeake*. Encamped at *Morristown*, by a series of stratagems, that would have done honor to the most celebrated Captains of ancient or modern times, he succeeded with an inferior force, to deceive an able General, to confine him within the intrenchments of *New York*, and prevent till too late, those reinforcements to the Conqueror of the Southern States, which would have enabled him to force a passage through his enemies and escape the threatening storm. The great object secured, he breaks up his camp, & rapidly advancing to meet the hitherto unconquered Chief, strips him of the laurels he had so lately won, to bind them, never to fade, on his victorious brow. Thus by one glorious enterprize, the end and object of all his anxiety & cares; of all his fatigues and labours, and of all his wishes; he established the independance, peace and safety of his Country, and fixed the key-stone in the triumphal Arch, of his military fame.

With a gallant army at his devotion and now well diciplined, which in the hands of SYLVA or any foldier of fortune, had perpetuated anarchy, and involved his country in blood, to ensure thereward of their services, such was his moderation and virtue, that he neglected no duty, he omitted no precaution to establish her peace and prosperity. as in every situation he had manifested a sacred regard to the property and rights of the citizen, his advice was tendered & his example recommended to his injured companions, to retire in peace to their domestic employments, and show themselves as eminent for the virtues of civil life, as their con-

duct had been praiseworthy in war.

It is a bold observation of an antient Philosopher, that a good man nobly struggling with adversity, is an object of complacency even to the Immortal Gods; but, surely it is not too bold to say that WASHINGTON, contending for the rights of human nature, crowned with success, and delivering the sword of empire to those from whom he received it, while his disinterested virtue, caused the gushing tear to flow down the cheeks of his veteran companions in arms, from the fathers of his country, and the grateful millions of America, must have attracted the applause and admiration of the departed heroes and benefactors of mankind, in all ages of the world, if it can be supposed, that from their blissful abodes, they concern themselves with human affairs.

The illustrious dead are ever beyond the reach of envy, but the *Virginian* HERO, while living, and covered with military glory, was not the object of the malignant passions, but the wonder and astonishment of men in every clime and under every form of Government. Such heroic spirits are not to be subdued: It is therefore perfectly credible, as I have often heard it asserted, that had Britain been successful in her great Contest for unlimited power over her Colonies, He would have led his brave companions across the *Apalachian* mountains, founded a new empire of liberty, and at some future and more fortunate period, reconquered the Atlantic states.—Mankind ought to erect Statues and Altars to the memory of those who bravely oppose themselves to the tide of ambition, and the unjust

claims of superior power.

After all these important military scenes, the most momentous, that could employ the time & the talents of a human being, because they related to all the interests of humanity, if we follow him to his beloved retirement, we shall find his active mind ever on the stretch for the good of his Country.— Though the world might think, like CÆSAR, that he had lived long enough for his glory; in his own opinion human life was too short to do all the good he desired and contemplated. However dearly therefore he prized retirement, however adverse to the tumult, the cares and perplexities of public life, he did not shrink from the burden, then, like CHARLES or DIOCLETIAN; but whenever his name and his influence became of importance to any great public measure his personal enjoyments were cheerfully sacrificed for the good of his fellow citizens.

When therefore, soon after the peace, all the resources and even the independance of his Country were prostrate, and the several states were striving, by vain, discordant efforts, to retrieve their affairs, and give vigour to the sinking State, it was seen that all was lost: Then the germ of our present CONSTITUTION, plainly alluded to in his circular letter to the States, as the object of his dearest hopes and wishes, put forth its tender fibres in his native state, and was fostered and matured by the united wisdom of America. That Heaven might show him to the world in the character of a statesman, as well as a soldier, and that it might be known to,

mankind that he was as capable in peace, as in war,
 at the unanimous and affectionate call of his Coun-
 try, he forsook the pursuits of agriculture, once
 more to hazard his spotless fame, in the turbulent
 scenes of political life. Frugal by nature and habit,
 but not avaricious, & possessed of a fortune suffi-
 ciently ample for all his desires, he refused the emo-
 luments of the high station to which he was sum-
 moned. His acceptance of the PRESIDENCY was
 distinguished, by the same self diffidence and modest-
 ty, with which he assumed the command of the ar-
 my; that quality so remarkable in him as a General
 and not less conspicuous in civil life; which always
 gives splendor to virtue, and is so conducive to per-
 fection. On this occasion, how sincerely did timid
 friendship tremble at the hazards he incurred! How
 artfully did intriguing ambition whisper her fears!
 But even America had not yet truly appreciated
 his excellencies: there was a godlike prudence in
 his character, which independent of every other ex-
 alted quality, rendered him equally necessary to the
 American people, at this important crisis, for their
 guide in peace, as he had been their leader in war.

It was a glorious spectacle, to behold this illustri-
 ous man, quitting his farm to repair to his exalted of-
 fice, so hazardous to his fame, so filled with anxiety
 and cares; every where escorted by numerous and
 affectionate friends; by the militia, the natural
 guards of our happy land; surrounded by promis-
 cuous & numberless multitudes, pressing to hail the
 father of his Country; and at last crowned with lau-
 rel by the fair of America, under the triumphal Arch
 erected at the bridge of that *Trenton*, which had

witnessed such astonishing reverses of fortune ; while they, marching to soft music, strewed their hero's way with flowers. But the solemn scene of his inauguration, the concourse of spectators, the visible impressions on their minds, of affection and gratitude ; his devout reverence and sensibility, accompanying his solemn appeal to heaven and earth at once, to defend the Constitution of his Country, filled the hearts of all with the sublimest pleasure, that human nature could feel, and more than could be expressed, but by floods of tears.

I will not conduct you through the arduous difficulties of his PRESIDENCY, in new & untried scenes, amidst contending factions and a world in arms, to secure the peace and to maintain the interests of his country ; they are known to us all, and his Presidency will be as remarkable in our history for the vigour as for the prudence of his administration. It is sufficient to observe that to him we are indebted for our present happy situation—that the ravages of Europe have not been extended to this, the only peaceful quarter of the world—that we have not been involved in the proscriptions & horrors of an exterminating war, which must have annihilated our commerce, trampled on agriculture, scattered religion, learning and the arts, to all the winds of heaven, fomented deadly factions never to be appeased, and deluged the land of liberty with blood. But our beloved President, preserving the dignified tenor of his way, conciliating the affections of his fellow-citizens, consulting their prejudices, respecting their interests, the public good his only aim, marched right on ; cultivating the arts of peace and promot-

ing justice with all the world ; whilst he was filling the forests of America, with hardy cultivators, the wide spread ocean with her numerous navigation, and the Universe with the fame and the wisdom of her Councils. God forbid ! that I should attribute to him exclusively, all the merit of those public measures, which often originated and were matured by the splendid abilities of those Great men, who have assisted in the administration of our Government. I acknowledge their transcendent merit, and submit to their abilities : But had not his soul disdained the crimes of that false, though dazzling ambition which allured CÆSAR and CROMWELL ; had his soul like MARLBOROUGH's, been the abode of sordid avarice ; had he been vain, intriguing and factious like many leaders in the French revolution, he had entailed endless miseries on his country, and America, like wretched Poland, or more wretched France, had e'er this time been put up to auction : swayed by no vice, governed by no examples in antient or modern story, but directed solely by the native purity and just conceptions, of a comprehensive and self taught mind, he has left himself an example to all future ages, who will regret that they did not live in our times, to be witnesses to his virtues. (4.)

Descended from the antient settlers, & a native of the most powerful State in the Union ; a state peopled like New-England, by a similar class of inhabitants, of the same descent & generally of like habits & manners ; (5) sensible of the political advantages resulting from these circumstances, & aware of the evils arising from the introduction of a promiscuous flood of for-

eigners, & of the fatal influence they might acquire in our Country, yet desirous of encouraging the immigration of virtuous and useful men, he was ever solicitous that the people of America should have their peculiar national character; this he wished to see established on the broad basis of universal justice, of religion, and general learning; of a peaceable and inoffensive demeanor, & of obedience to the laws: that America, constant to her antient practices, should proudly reverence herself was his perpetual advice. To insure our independence, as a Sovereign state, on foreign aid, we have witnessed his ardent desires, and persevering efforts, for the promotion of those national establishments, in our country, by which other Powers have been elevated to glory; opposing himself equally to foreign influence and domestic faction, the certain ruin of free states, if not steadily resisted, he consulted the public good alone, unawed by menaces, not surprised by intrigue, nor seduced by that mistaken popular zeal, which at one period, came near to unhinge our government, in favor of the leaders of the revolution in *France*; a revolution, originating for the happiness of the people, which he and all virtuous men, once thought so justifiable; but alas! a revolution, since stained with so many crimes, so doubtful in its issue, & yet so desirable, if wisely settled, for the millions who inhabit her wide domain: Despising the crooked paths of an insidious policy, he fixed the plain and eternal principles of justice, for the rule of his public as well as private conduct; the rest he left to Heaven.—When therefore the Leaders in *France*, wished to persuade a great and powerful nation, whose empire they had impiously assumed, to con-

sider us as a divided & a factious people; when they compelled us to arm for the protection of our commerce, & even of our independance as a nation, the hoary CHIEF, now in the vale of years, was still the center of our hopes; he readily came forward, once more, to cheer us with his influence, to head our armies, and to defend that peaceful system which he had bequeathed to his GREAT SUCCESSOR. This last public service was equally glorious to himself and important to his Country with all the past: Europe anxiously waited our decision: his name and example were an essential link in our chain of union; seconding the bold and decisive measures of a daring race of Patriots, in Congress, we no longer doubted of our course; the ardour of enthusiastic approbation and applause, inspired the substantial voice of America, success beamed, at once, on our councils, and Europe resounded our praises.

Thus from his earliest life to its last scene, the glory of his Country, the interest and happiness of his fellow-citizens, seem to have been his sole ambition: Such ambition was surely godlike, and deserves all our gratitude and applause.

I forbear to expatiate on his private virtues; for though sometimes in his presence, I cannot presume to speak of them from personal knowledge; they are known to all the world. The madness of party has not dared to tax him with vice: Frailties he unquestionably had, for what human being is without them? but they were so lost in the splendor of his virtues, that it would be now difficult, for malice itself, to recollect them: the dignity of his character was never debased by vice; for neither vice nor

folly dared to approach him ; of strong passions, but possessing great strength of mind to restrain them ; of great sensibility, how often have the thronging multitudes beheld him overcome by their affection, deprived of the powers of language, while the tears of tenderness trickled down his manly cheeks. Modest by nature, & sufficiently diffident to induce exertions, to arrive at perfection, the various stations and vicissitudes of life, had no effect on his general character ; he was the same in the height of prosperity as in the depth of adversity ; in the most exalted station as in the most retired scenes ; the consciousness of merit never escaped him, if he ever possessed it ; his spirit was too great to be vain ; even merited praise, in his presence, was sure to embarrass and offend him : Celebrated for order and regularity in business, and for possessing the talents, bestowed by nature, and strengthened by habit, of persevering and unwearied industry. Lofty and graceful in person, of gentle and chaste, though grave deportment, yet easy of access to all ; to his equals condescending ; to his inferiors obliging ; he commanded affection without soliciting popularity ; the tenderest husband, the truest friend, of exemplary piety, and one of the most virtuous of the sons of men.

Such is the character universally given to the hero of *Virginia*, to the father of his Country. Such is the man for whose loss the wise and the good, throughout the world, and the millions of America, will "pour the recollecting tear, while all his memory rushes on their mind." Possessing such exalted virtues, and having dis-

charged his duty, is it wonderful, that the last expressions of his useful life should correspond with the whole tenor of his conduct through it ? " That he was not afraid to die." Conscious integrity of heart, altogether independent of the approbation or censure of a world, often guided by prejudiced or malignant motives, alone support the good man under every affliction and in the article of death ; WASHINGTON possessed of this integrity, did not fear to die ; his attention was not engrossed by any recollection of the great scenes he had passed through, or of the vain applauses of the admiring world ; but sublime and modest to the last, he bid adieu to our sublunary state, without noticing any of its concerns, its praise, or censures, as altogether beneath his attention, without a struggle and without a groan.

Citizens of America !

Were it not for the appearance of such characters, at stated periods, and for their influence, mankind would frequently experience those miseries of which the early Greeks, so feelingly complained, " that mortal man is born to bear ;"—" that earth nourishes no animal, more miserable than man ;"—and that death is preferable to life : " Tyranny and confusion would overwhelm the nations, and human affairs, perhaps, rush to their destruction.

His conduct and example are yet left for our imitation ; the great body of the nation, but those especially who fill the various offices of public trust, will be inspired by his disinterested conduct, by his active industry and zeal for the prosperity of his country, by his fortitude, perseverance, and

magnanimity ; by his public services and private virtues, to persevere in defending the established order of society, and our free Constitution ; probably the last effort of man for a Republican government ; to be obedient to the laws ; to encourage learning, maintain religion, practice moderation and promote universal justice. But while we deplore his loss, & pay this tribute of affection to his memory ; while his grateful country erects Statues, and monuments to perpetuate his fame ; let us remember that we have not lost our all in this great calamity : He has left an able successor to his exalted virtues ; a friend & companion, who has run the race of glory with him ; a PRESIDENT ; as amiable in domestic life, & equally desirous of that fame, which is the reward of excellent actions ; of profound abilities ; skilled in all the policies of foreign courts & nations ; vigilant & persevering ; the founder of our NAVY ; the defender of our commerce ; a sincere lover of his country, and of a high, independent, republican spirit ; a spirit which would have been honored with all the praises of eloquence, in ancient Greece or Rome, in their most heroic times ; no threats can terrify, or affections seduce ; no intrigues can over reach, or clamors bias, his inflexible mind. To his intimate knowledge of this part of our country, its advantages and wants, as well as to his sagacity and firmness, supported by his eminent friend the patriot JAY, statesmen immovable, as yon Blue cloud, capt hill, are we indebted, as citizens of America—for the extensive fisheries, which support our hardy inhabitants ;—for the ground on which we now assemble ;—for these lofty hills, which heave

up their vast bodies to the keen North west, and arrest the oceans clouds to fertilize our soil ;—for this wide extended country, now thick covered with timber for the uses of building, for a lucrative trade, and for future navies, but rapidly advancing to the delightful prospects of agriculture and the busy arts of life ;—for yon safe and spacious bay, New England's pride, guarded by so many islands, which stretch their long shores and interlock, to oppose the Atlantic's stormy tides, yet leave such ready channels to its boundless waters ; in fine, for that majestic river pouring along from the distant North his deep and copious flood, through fertile tracts and broken mountains, which even now feel the warm influence of our increasing commerce.* Our departed hero, at the head of our armies, fought for these great objects ; but had either of these our Ambassadors for the glorious peace of 1783 been negligent or pliant, Britain's navy at this moment had here rode in safety, and these gigantic landscapes been lost to us, perhaps, forever. (6)

We have moreover a SENATE faithful to their Country's rights, and watchful for her interests ; besides a fearless band of STATESMEN throughout the union ; some of whom remain of those who were educated in the most dangerous & turbulent times of our republic, and many who have been conversant with the most virtuous founders of it, who shall yet continue and exalt her fame.

F I N I S.

* The town and mountain of Blue-hill—the vast range of surrounding hills, at a short distance—the great bay & river of Penobscot, the islands and Atlantic ocean, form a magnificent view from Castine.

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NOTES, referred to in the preceding pages.

Page 7. NOTE (1). It is very certain that a disregard to private interest was formerly more frequent than at present ; the simplicity and disinterestedness of ancient manners do not gain credit with us ; so different from ours, the period when they prevailed is too remote for evidence to satisfy our scruples ; but this is to overthrow the credibility of all history ; examine, among a thousand instances the lives of EPAMINONDAS, of CURIUS, of FABIUS, of CINCINNATUS. Will it be believed, a single Century hence, that it was a very general opinion, at the commencement of our Revolutionary war, that at least one half the property of every individual might probably be necessary to defend the remainder, with the right of taxing ourselves ? and that the war was undertaken under such an expectation ? Actors in that controversy, we almost disbelieve it ourselves ; so astonishing has been the revolution of manners, and such the effect of the commercial spirit ! Is it true that where this spirit prevails all is venality ? see Carthage so highly extolled by ARISTOTLE, among the ancient Republics, an instance in point ;—In modern times we have seen no free Republics : but America is now making the experiment : In their early stages, the free Republics of antiquity, exhibited many noble examples of individual magnanimity and moderation, tho' they always degenerated into vile Aristocracies or despotism : God forbid that the American Republic should be in a Century what Carthage, our archetype in many respects had, but just arrived at in six. WASHINGTON, a cultivator, reminds us of that disinterested & heroic patriotism which we before found only in books ; but our yeomanry were actuated by like principles ; to defend their property indeed, for the purpose of securing an equal portion of the necessaries and comforts of life, for themselves and posterity, a just & natural right ; and not to accumulate, for the purpose of hoarding, a mere commercial idea : but let no man suppose that commerce and agriculture do not mutually invigorate each other ; the inference is directly the reverse : the flourishing state of a country, in modern times, depends on apportioning the proper encouragement to each : the ancient Republics for the most part, acquired affluence, statues, ornaments, by plundering others, like Rome, or by commerce,

like Carthage : France, seems to propose the former for her example. If the yeomanry of a country possess, from their education and habits more simplicity and virtue, the commercial interest affords more ready and ample means both for defence and great enterprizes : But it is a question how many merchants would have thought it *prudent* to risk what the American *FARMERS* did, on so doubtful an issue ?

Id. Note (2). General WASHINGTON's fortune at the commencement of the revolutionary war, has been, generally, estimated at about four thousand pounds sterling *per. annum* ; when we take into consideration the nature of the estates, from which this income is calculated, it is probably not over-rated. By his will, lately published, he directs the sale of certain waste lands, to which he affixes the value of nearly 500,000 dollars, which it is presumed, is quadruple the value of them in 1775 ; the rise of uncultivated lands may be considered as the income from them, after deducting the interest of the original cost and other necessary charges, which cannot be considerable ;—the annual rise on these lands alone therefore, must be nearly 7,500 dollars ; and this is an addition to the income of £4,000 a year, which is computed from his cultivated estate, and from personal property. His estate was valued at 666,000 dollars so long ago as 1776—an immense property in any Country ! but in America of almost incalculable value, because of our increasing settlements, population and commerce, which produce such astonishing effects upon the value of waste lands. And this was the fortune which he staked upon the success of the revolutionary war ; those of us who recollect that war, in its commencement and progress, must remember one subject of reproach, very generally and liberally objected to the early defenders of our rights, that not one of them had a clear estate : the immense body of landholders so unanimously in the cause of their country was of no consequence in the eyes of its enemies. When we produced to them a HANCOCK ; even him they affected to think, and took much pains to prove, insolvent ; it was of some weight therefore with many weak minds, to bring proof that we had men of property on our side, & it was matter of exultation to all, that we who possessed the rich independence of WASHINGTON

should risk his all for the rights of America.

“What could, when half way up the hill, to fame,
Induce thee, to go back and link with shame?
Was it ambition, vanity or spite

That prompted thee with CONGRESS to unite?

Such were the Libellous Cantos, on WASHINGTON, & the principal American patriots, published at New-York, by RIVINGTON, during the late war, and so little merit was then allowed to the defenders of our country. But

“Tis to the virtues of such men, man owes,
His portion in the good that heaven bestows;
And when recording history displays,
Feats of renown, tho’ wrought in antient days,
Tells of a few stout hearts, that fought or died,
Where duty placed them, at their country’s side;
The man that is not moved with what he reads,
That takes not fire at their heroic deeds,
Unworthy of the blessings of the brave,
Is base in kind, and born to be a slave.”

COWPER.

The founders of a nation and its brave defenders are the true nobility; it would be a curious subject of heraldry to be sure, to devise another kind in ours, & yet I have heard of some among us whose fathers or grand-fathers were plain honest fishermen, in some remote corner of G. Britain, a few years ago, not able however to write or read—or were driving some humble mechanical employment, who begin to boast of illustrious descent. A Biographical Dictionary, with sketches of the lives & praiseworthy actions, of this new order of nobles, from authentic records, would be a rich present to the *Historical Society*.

NOTE 3. Page 11. The enemy, if we stood in need of their opinion, acknowledged, that in the course of the campaign of 1776, the most critical period of the war, and particularly after the retreat from New-York, Gen. WASHINGTON performed the part of an able commander; from this time we behold him in the character of FABRUS, and even rivalling that great General, in a mode of warfare, which similar necessities dictated,

and was eventually crowned with the same success.

Page 19. NOTE 4. I will not be answerable that some modes of expression in this Oration, have not been applied to eminent characters before, though where or by whom I cannot immediately recollect; if I did, it would not be of importance to refer to the book or writer; if they be just and applicable, it is immaterial on such an occasion as the present, from whom they originated.

Id. NOTE 5. The founders of nations have been deservedly held in the highest estimation by their countrymen; in some instances they have been deified by antiquity, while their virtues, sufferings, and heroic actions, have been the subject of universal applause: If those who have led Colonies to distant lands, and established new empires, to tyrannize over the human race, have been thus celebrated by mankind; what praises do not those deserve who, for the enjoyment of religious and civil liberty quitted all the delights, so universally attached to country, and such a country as England, in order to secure the rights of human kind, in the the wildernesses of America? If ever a people ought to venerate their founders, we ought surely to reverence the enterprising spirit, the fortitude, perseverance, and piety, as well as the abilities of ours: some have been so long in the habit of considering them as governed solely by a religious zeal, which many in later times, have thought contracted and absurd, that they have not allowed them their due share of merit: I consider them in a different light; as the founders of the American Republic; after making due allowance, for the spirit of their times, for the weakness of the human mind, and its progressive improvement, we shall find as great men among them as have heretofore or since distinguished the fathers of Countries. The sagacity and perseverance of COLUMBUS, discovered the new world; but our ancestors through every hardship settled & civilized it; & originated such institutions, as have always secured to their posterity the enjoyment of the equal rights of man, & produced our happy CONSTITUTION, which bids fair to spread the liberties of the human race, THROUGHOUT THE NEW WORLD, if men of virtue & talents will bravely come forward, & persist at all hazards in its defence. That the original settlers of Massachusetts, considered themselves as founding a new &

independent empire is proved by the whole tenor of our history; so long as our nation exists they ought to be remembered by us with gratitude; and so long in particular the name and virtues of JOHN WINTHROP, the WASHINGTON of his age, and so justly fit the father of his country, be honored and esteemed. As the building of Rome was the epoch from which she computed important events, I wish to see the era of our birth as a nation carried back to 1610, the first settlement of Virginia, or 1620, the first settlement of New-England, instead of computing from the mere declaration of Independence in 1776.—The original of nations, is from the first establishment of their political institutions; our ancestors laid the foundation of the American Republic, at one of the periods alluded to: thus the Revolutionary war, began, in order to subjugate us, on the 19th of April, in the year 165 or 175 of our nation; from that time we have had our peculiar customs, institutions, &c.

Page 25. NOTE 6. In settling the treaty of 1783, the British minister Mr. OSWALD, proposed the river Ohio as our boundary to the westward, the Penobscot as our eastern boundary; & that we should relinquish all right to the Newfoundland fishery.—The French minister, the Count DE VERGENNES, and Dr. FRANKLIN, one of our ministers, were ready & anxious to conclude the treaty upon these terms; under a pretence of preventing our fishery on the banks of Newfoundland, it is easy enough to comprehend that occasions would soon have occurred for G. Britain to prevent our fishing even on our own coasts; protected by her formidable navy, and assuming the right of extending the Newfoundland fishery, as she pleased, what could America have done, but to engage in a new war? But these terms were opposed, by our two other ministers, Mr. ADAMS, now President of the U. States, and Mr. JAY, now governor of New-York, with determined firmness; the conference ended, that day, with a resolution on their part to pursue the war, rather than submit; they stood alone; but two such men standing alone are an host, & they succeeded in fixing the treaty as it now is; if there be any merit in extending the limits of our country, and establishing a right to so immensely valuable an object as the fishery, let it be remembered and repeated that we are indebted to them for the firmness & abilities of JOHN ADAMS & JOHN JAY.

